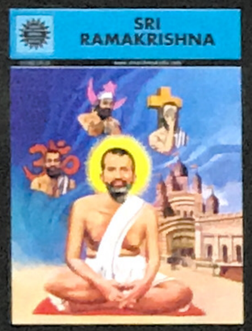
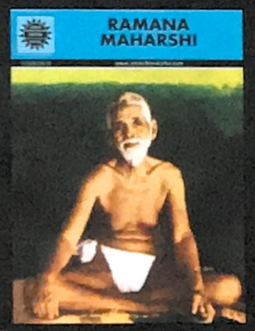
VISIONARIES

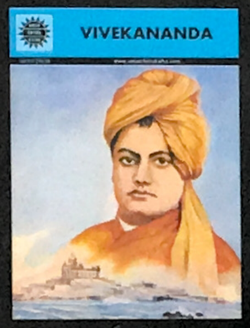
TALES OF SAI BABA

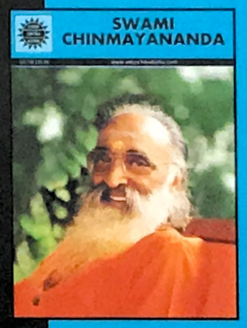
The pious flocked to Shirdi in Maharashtra. Sai Baba's all-encompassing love made them feel better, happier and more at peace. He could reveal himself as the Supreme Deity and yet assume the form of a street dog; he could turn water to oil and save a child far away from burning flames. However, by the time he left this world, in 1918, he had also made thousands understand that good acts are the only miracle needed to find God.

OTHER ACK VISIONARIES:

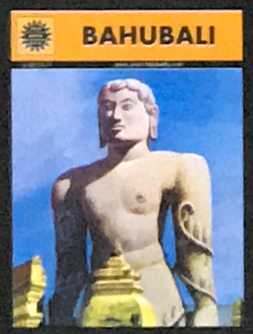








ALSO LOOK FOR:



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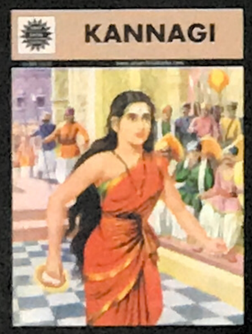

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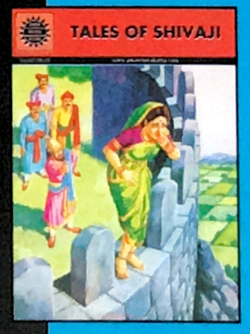

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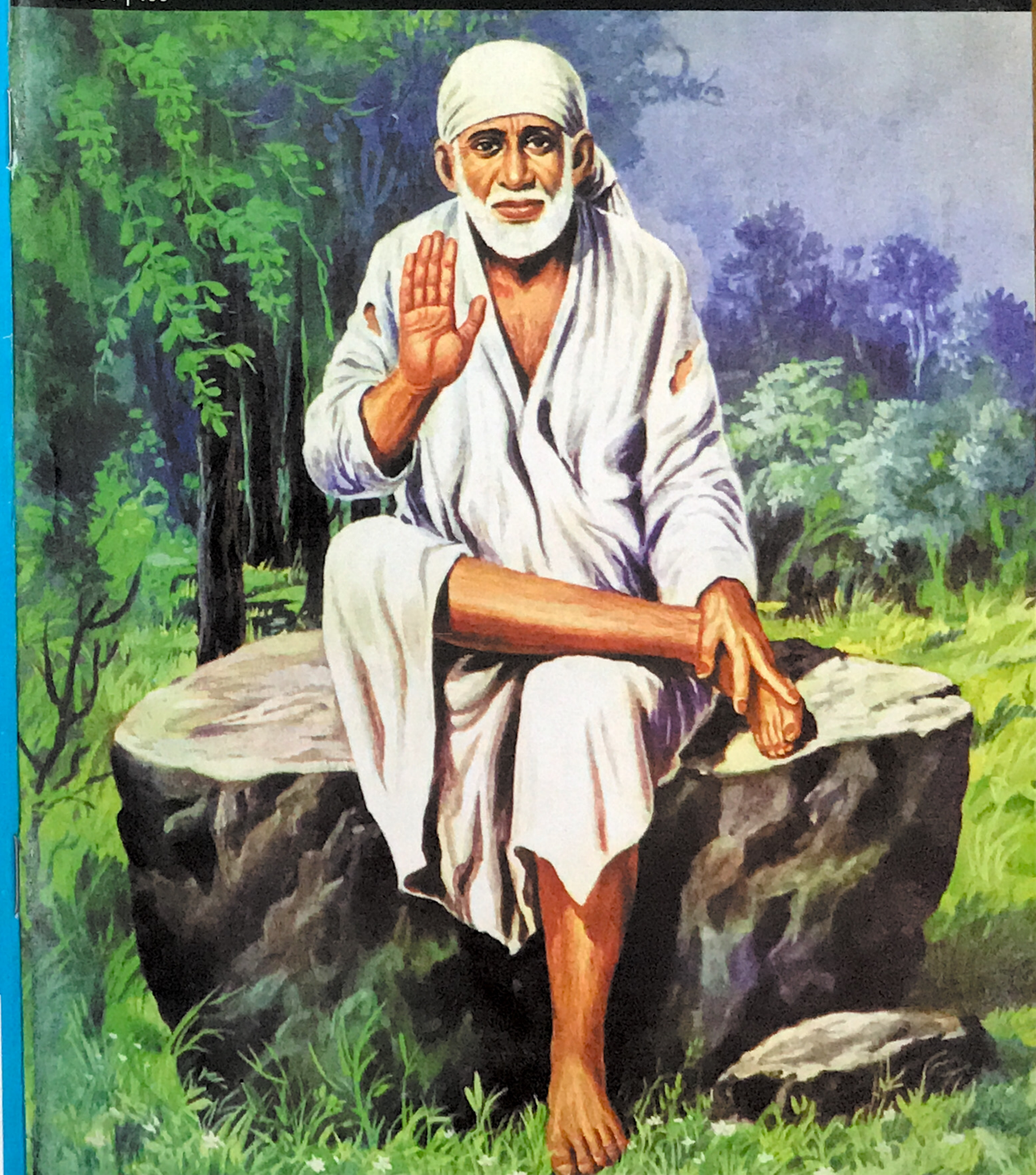


BABA COMES TO SHIRDI

CHANDBHAI, THE HEADMAN OF A VILLAGE CALLED DHOOPKHEDE,* ONCE LOST HIS HORSE AND WAS LOOKING FOR IT.

SUDDENLY HE HEARD A VOICE.

YOU LOOK TIRED. COME HERE AND REST A WHILE.

HE TURNED ROUND IN SURPRISE.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN THIS JUNGLE, CHANDBHAI?

WHO IS THIS YOUNG FAKIR? HOW DOES HE KNOW MY NAME?

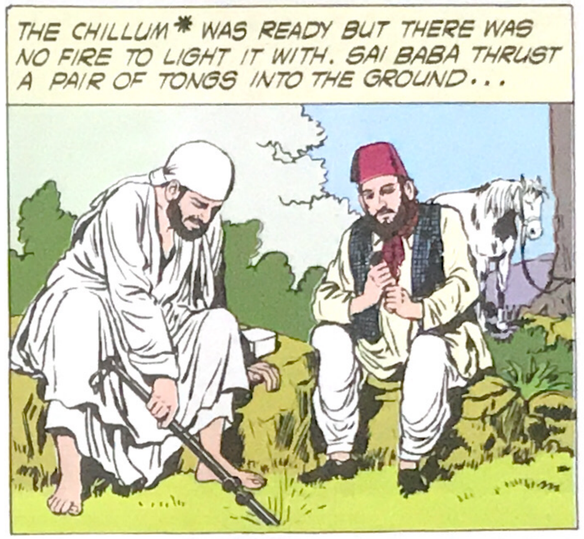
* IN AURANGABAD

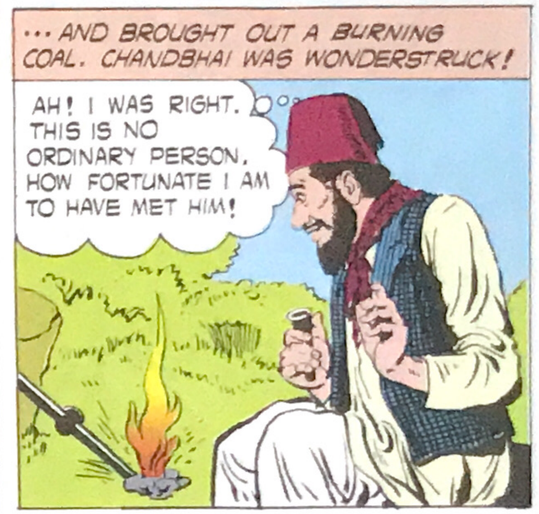
I HAVE LOST MY HORSE. I HAVE LOOKED FOR IT EVERYWHERE BUT CAN'T SEEM TO FIND IT!
GO AND LOOK BEHIND THOSE TREES.

YA ALLAH! I HAVE FOUND MY HORSE.

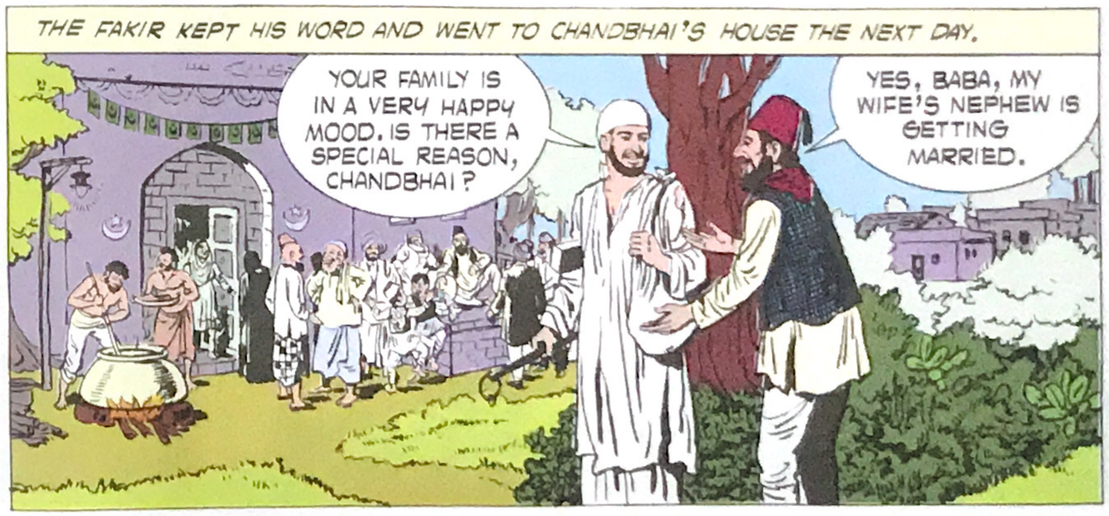
THIS FAKIR IS NOT AN ORDINARY MAN....

I AM GREATLY INDEBTED TO YOU. WHO ARE YOU? WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
SOME PEOPLE CALL ME SAI BABA. SIT DOWN, BROTHER. LET'S HAVE A SMOKE TOGETHER.


THE CHILLUM* WAS READY BUT THERE WAS NO FIRE TO LIGHT IT WITH. SAI BABA THRUST A PAIR OF TONGS INTO THE GROUND...


...AND BROUGHT OUT A BURNING COAL. CHANDBHAI WAS WONDERSTRUCK!
AH! I WAS RIGHT. THIS IS NO ORDINARY PERSON. HOW FORTUNATE I AM TO HAVE MET HIM!

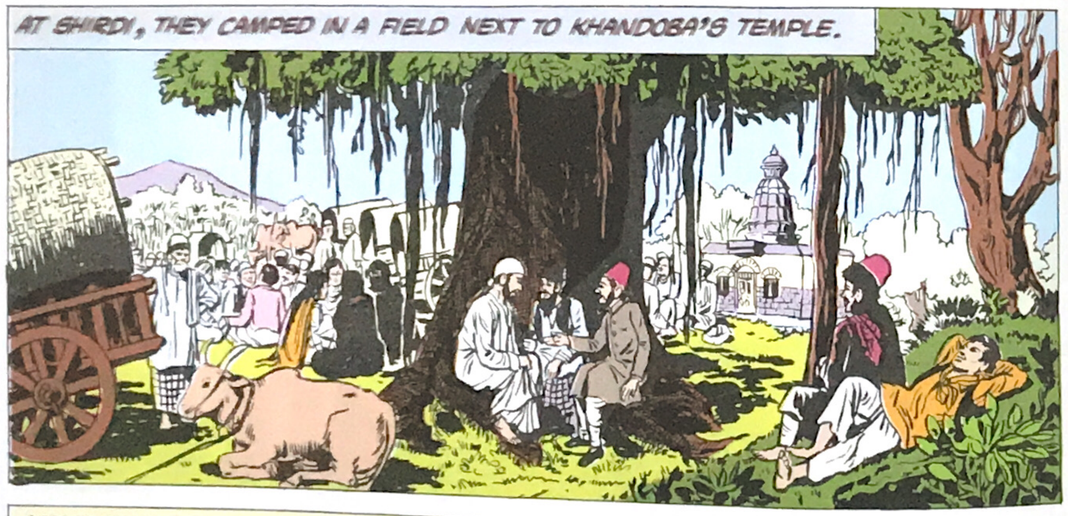
BABA, WON'T YOU COME HOME WITH ME AND BE MY GUEST FOR A FEW DAYS?
THANK YOU. I WILL COME TOMORROW.

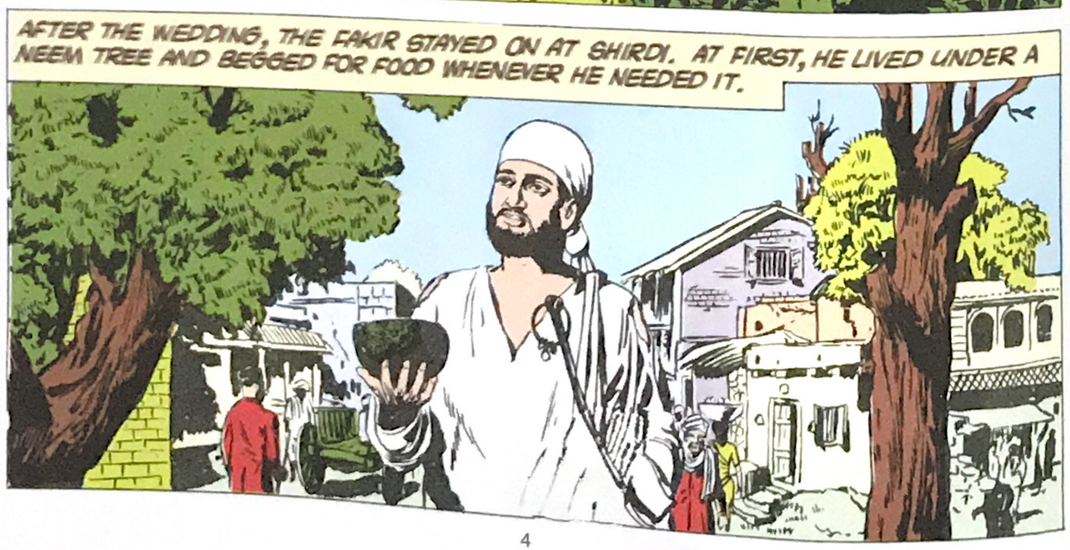

THE FAKIR KEPT HIS WORD AND WENT TO CHANDBHAI'S HOUSE THE NEXT DAY.
YOUR FAMILY IS IN A VERY HAPPY MOOD. IS THERE A SPECIAL REASON, CHANDBHAI?
YES, BABA, MY WIFE'S NEPHEW IS GETTING MARRIED.

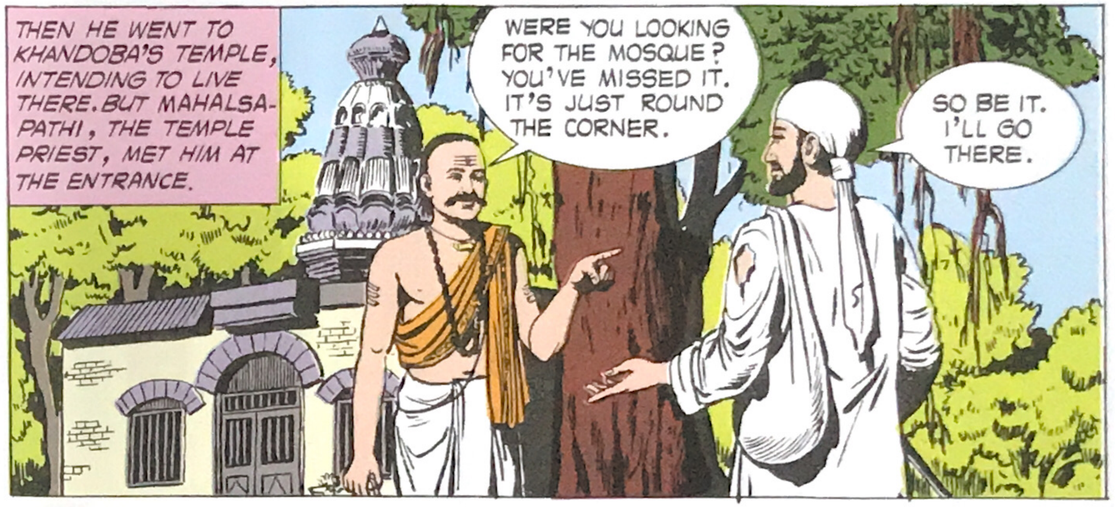
* CLAY PIPE

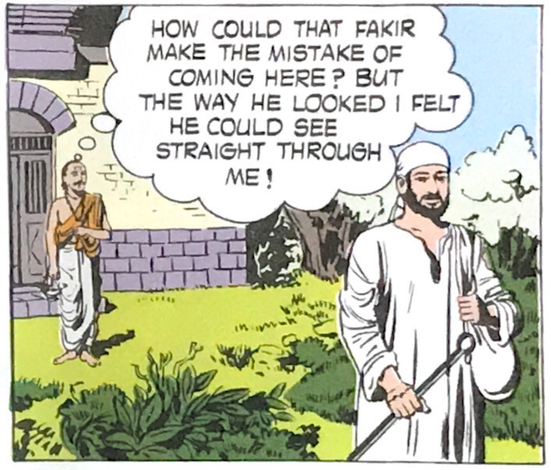
THE BRIDE IS FROM SHIRDI AND WE WILL ALL BE GOING THERE IN A FEW DAYS. WILL YOU COME WITH US?
YES, I WOULD LIKE TO.

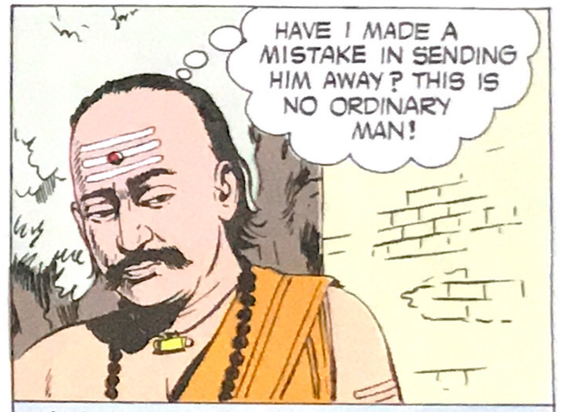
AND A FEW DAYS LATER, HE WENT TO SHIRDI ALONG WITH THE MARRIAGE PARTY.

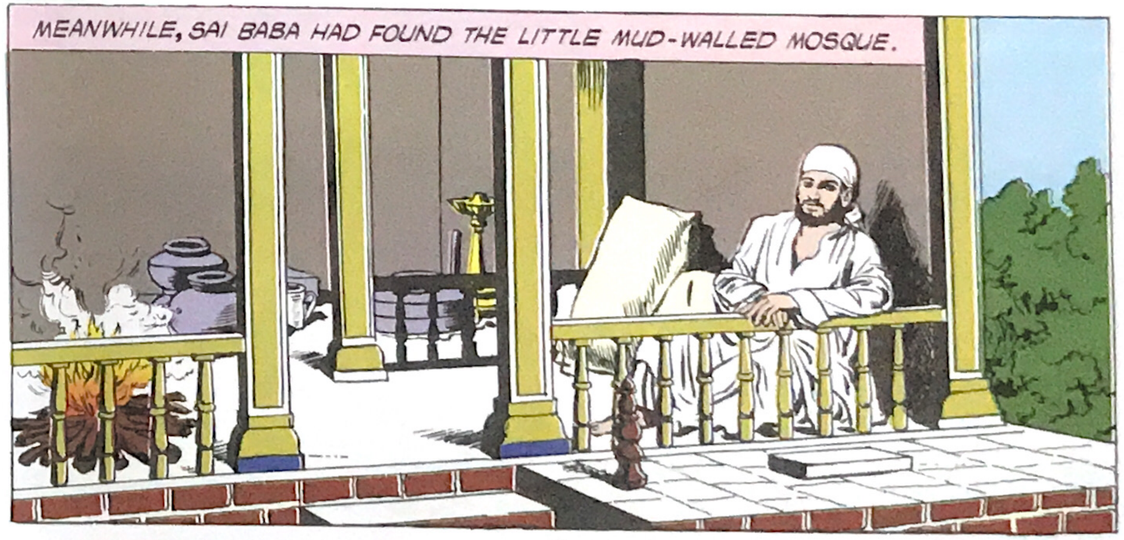

AT SHIRDI, THEY CAMPED IN A FIELD NEXT TO KHANDOBA'S TEMPLE.


AFTER THE WEDDING, THE FAKIR STAYED ON AT SHIRDI. AT FIRST, HE LIVED UNDER A NEEM TREE AND BEGGED FOR FOOD WHENEVER HE NEEDED IT.


THEN HE WENT TO KHANDOBA'S TEMPLE, INTENDING TO LIVE THERE. BUT MAHALSAPATHI, THE TEMPLE PRIEST, MET HIM AT THE ENTRANCE.
WERE YOU LOOKING FOR THE MOSQUE? YOU'VE MISSED IT. IT'S JUST ROUND THE CORNER.
SO BE IT. I'LL GO THERE.


HOW COULD THAT FAKIR MAKE THE MISTAKE OF COMING HERE? BUT THE WAY HE LOOKED I FELT HE COULD SEE STRAIGHT THROUGH ME!


HAVE I MADE A MISTAKE IN SENDING HIM AWAY? THIS IS NO ORDINARY MAN!
MAHALSAPATHI LATER BECAME ONE OF SAI BABA'S STAUNCH DISCIPLES.


MEANWHILE, SAI BABA HAD FOUND THE LITTLE MUD-WALLED MOSQUE.

BABA AND THE OIL VENDORS

SAI BABA MADE THE MOSQUE HIS HOME. THERE HE KEPT A DHUNI * BURNING DAY AND NIGHT. THE MOSQUE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS DWARKAMAI.

HE SHARED THE FOOD WHICH HE HAD COLLECTED BY BEGGING, WITH POOR PEOPLE.

BABA, GIVE ME SOME FOOD; MY CHILDREN ARE STARVING.

HERE! TAKE WHAT YOU WANT.

IT WAS ALSO HIS HABIT TO SHARE WHAT WAS LEFT OVER WITH STRAY CATS, DOGS AND BIRDS.

BABA USED TO GO ROUND THE MARKET PLACE.

PLEASE GIVE ME SOME OIL.

AFTER EACH MERCHANT HAD RELUCTANTLY GIVEN HIM A LITTLE OIL...

* SACRED FIRE

... HE WOULD MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ONE.

PLEASE, LET ME HAVE A LITTLE OIL!

OH! IT'S THE FAKIR AGAIN. HERE TAKE SOME OIL AND GO!

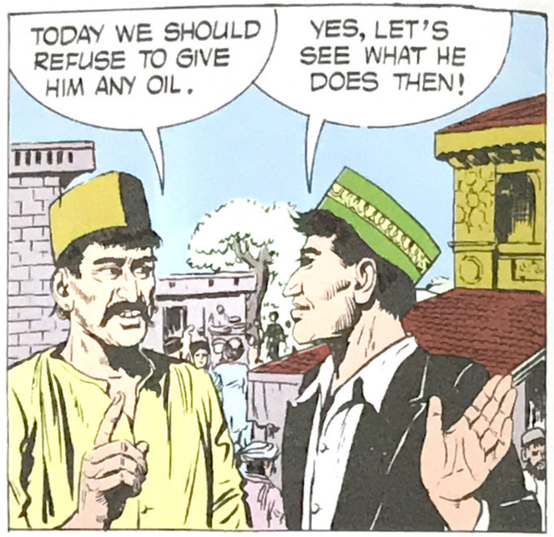
AFTER COLLECTING THE OIL, BABA WOULD RETURN TO HIS MOSQUE...

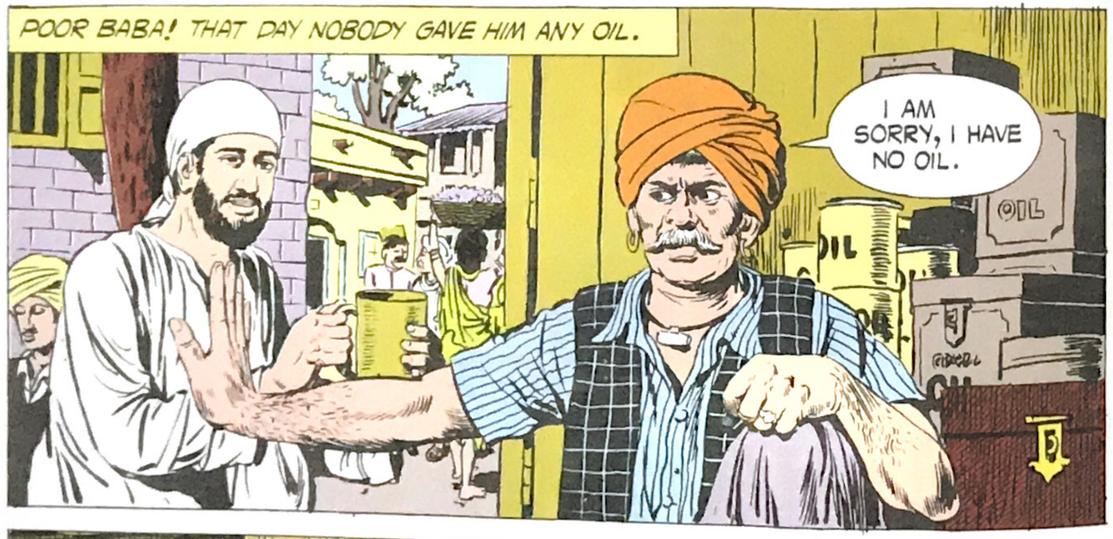
...AND LIGHT TINY LAMPS AT NIGHT.

ONE DAY—

HERE COMES THE FAKIR AGAIN!

HE KEEPS BEGGING FOR OIL EVERY DAY.
IT IS TIME WE DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

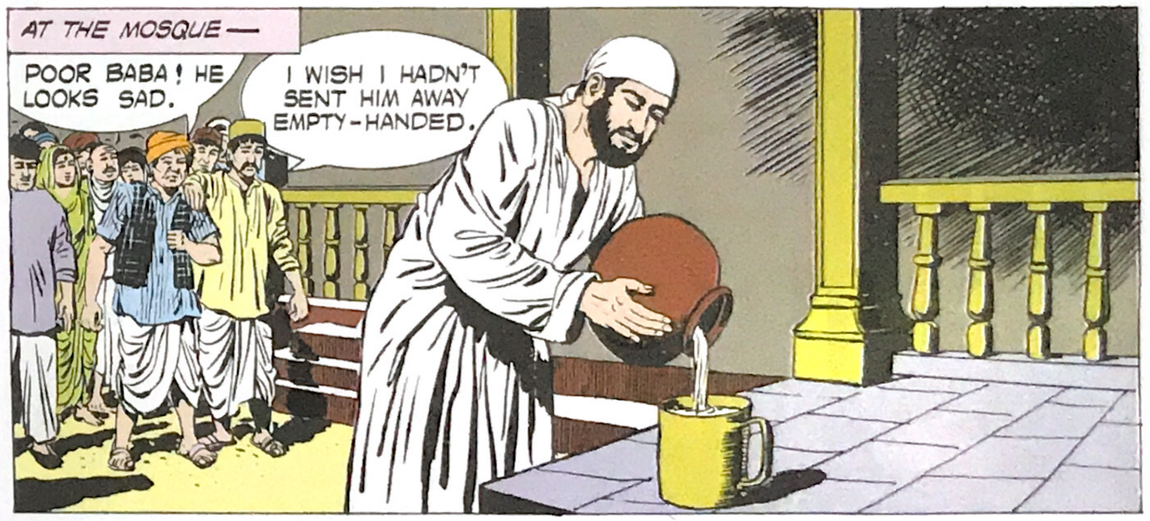

TODAY WE SHOULD REFUSE TO GIVE HIM ANY OIL.
YES, LET'S SEE WHAT HE DOES THEN!

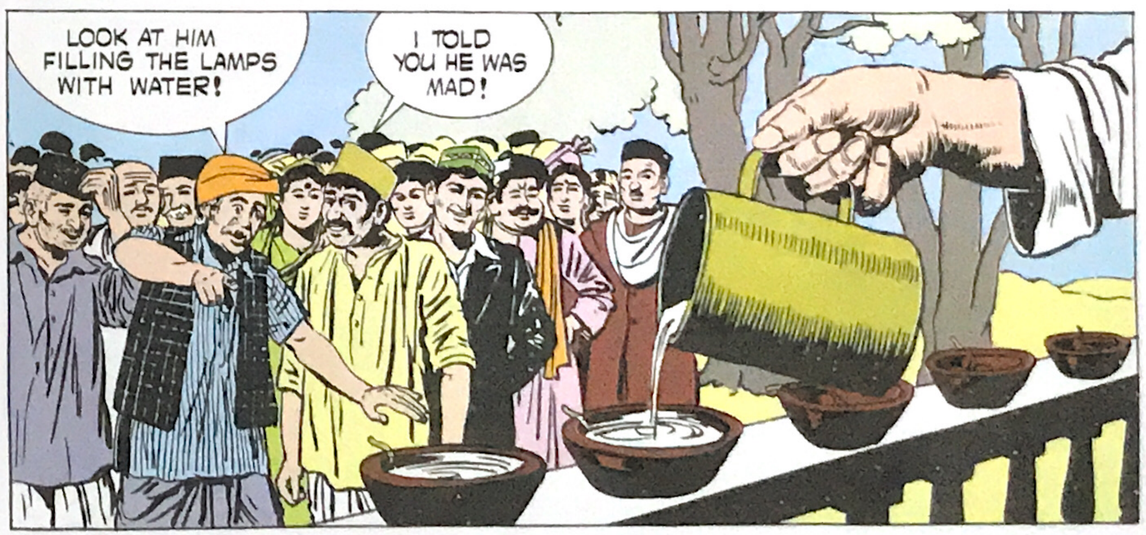

POOR BABA! THAT DAY NOBODY GAVE HIM ANY OIL.
I AM SORRY, I HAVE NO OIL.
OIL

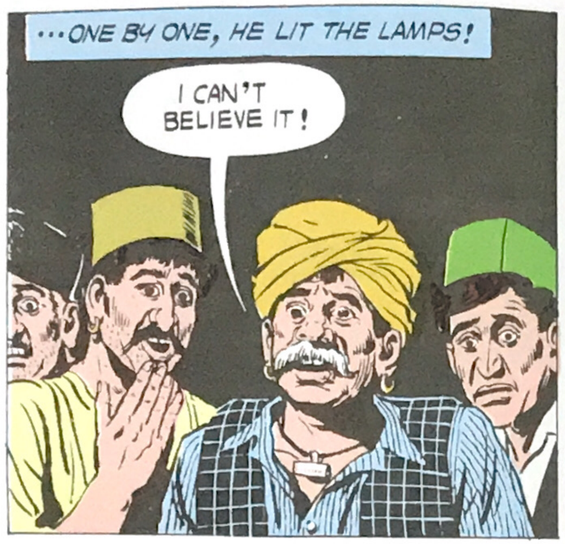
BABA, IF YOU WANT OIL, YOU MUST PAY FOR IT.
OIL
OIL

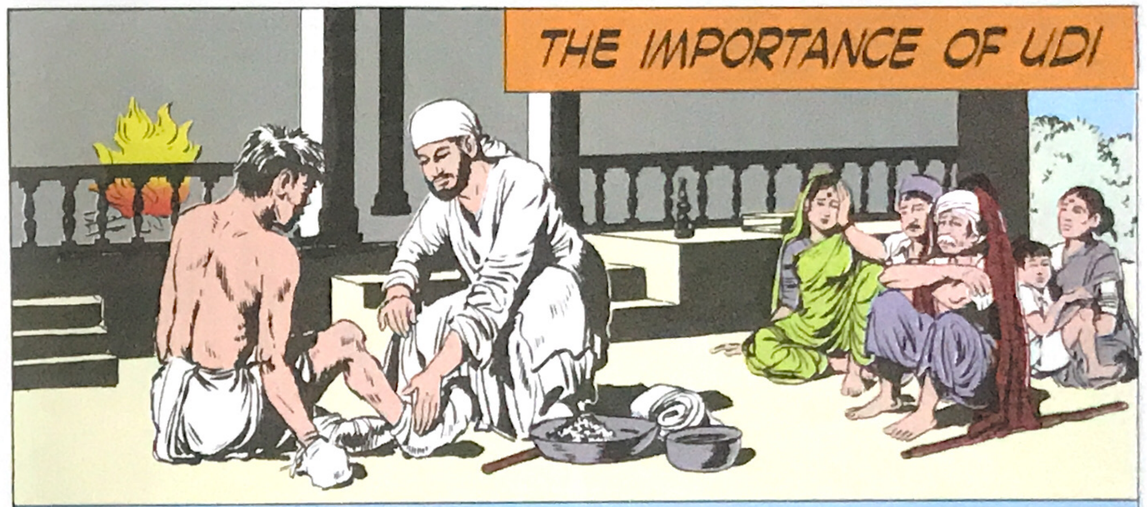
WE CANNOT AFFORD TO GIVE YOU OIL EVERY DAY.

SILENTLY, SAI BABA WENT AWAY. THE MERCHANTS BECAME A LITTLE ANXIOUS.
WHAT WILL HE DO NOW?
LET'S FOLLOW HIM AND SEE.


AT THE MOSQUE —
POOR BABA! HE LOOKS SAD.
I WISH I HADN'T SENT HIM AWAY EMPTY-HANDED.

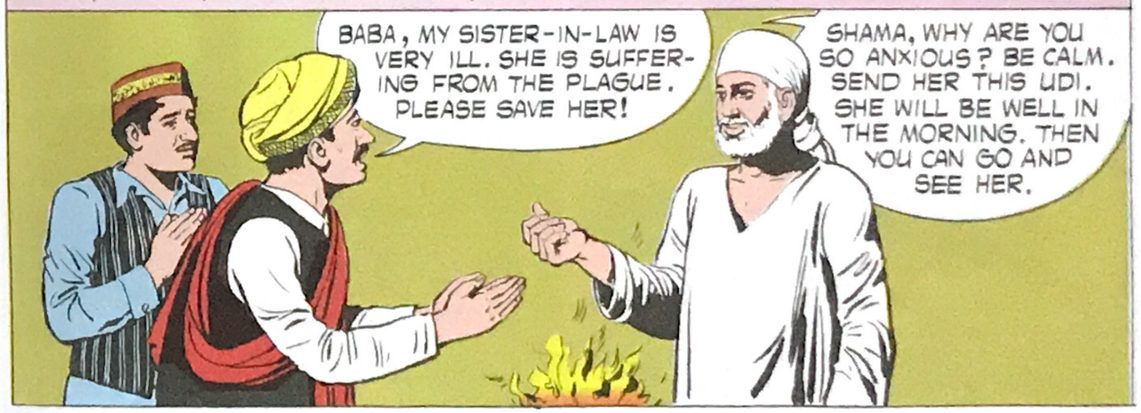

LOOK AT HIM FILLING THE LAMPS WITH WATER!
I TOLD YOU HE WAS MAD!





SLOWLY THE PEOPLE OF SHIRDI BEGAN TO RESPECT SAI BABA. WHEN SICK PEOPLE CAME TO HIM FOR HELP, HE CURED THEM WITH MEDICINES WHICH HE PREPARED FROM HERBS. SAI BABA TREATED EVERY ONE ALIKE. HE MADE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR. HE KNEW NO CASTE OR CREED. HE EVEN SERVED LEPERS.

AS THE YEARS WENT BY, THE CROWDS INCREASED. SAI BABA THEN STOPPED GIVING HERBAL MEDICINES. INSTEAD HE GAVE 'UDI', THE SACRED ASH, TO EVERY ONE. ONE NIGHT, SHAMA, A DEVOTEE OF BABA, CAME TO HIM WITH HIS YOUNGER BROTHER.



THE NEXT MORNING—

THE UDI HAS CURED HER!

I KNEW IT WOULD!

SHAMA RUSHED BACK TO THE MOSQUE, HIS HEART OVERFLOWING WITH GRATITUDE.

BABA, YOU ARE INDEED OUR GOD AND SAVIOUR!

BE THANKFUL TO HIM, SHAMA! I AM ONLY HIS INSTRUMENT. HE IS THE SOLE DOER AND INSPIRER!

AND THIS SACRED ASH CARRIES A GREAT MESSAGE, SHAMA! GOD IS ETERNAL AND THE ONLY REALITY. ALL ELSE THAT YOU SEE IN THIS UNIVERSE PERISHES. OUR BODIES WILL ONE DAY TURN INTO ASH. TRY TO UNDERSTAND THIS.

YES, BABA.

THE HUNGRY DOG

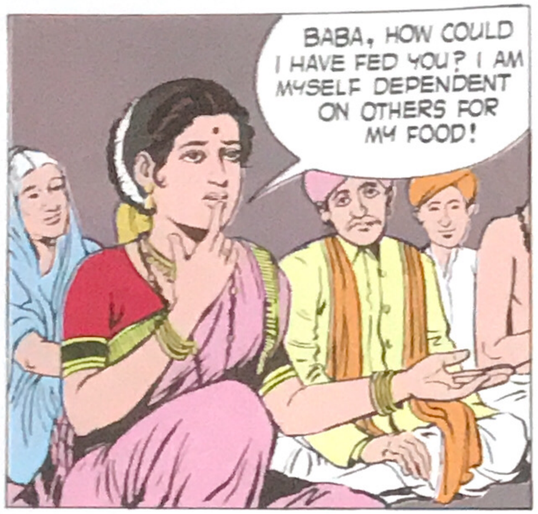
THAT POOR DOG LOOKS HUNGRY.

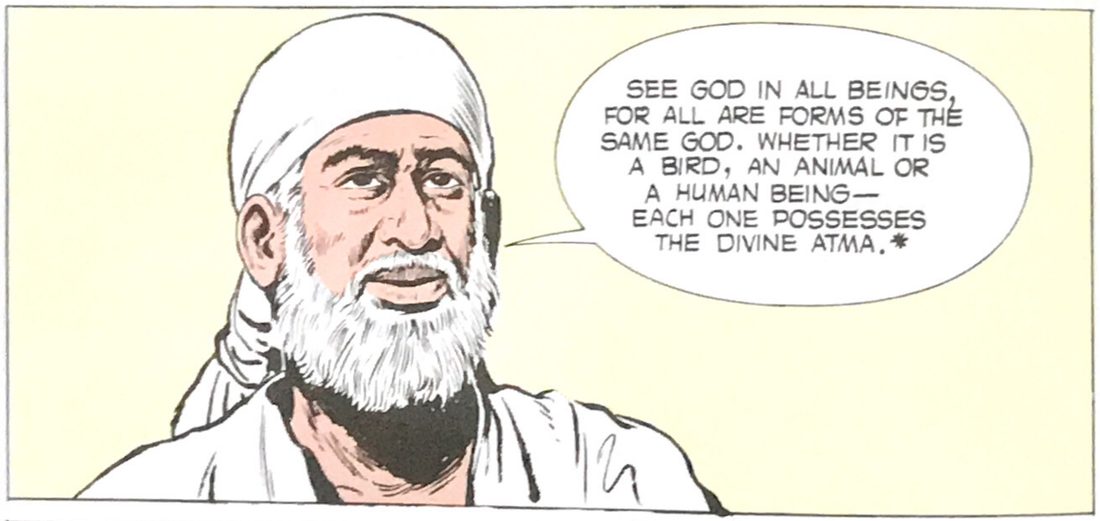
ONCE, MRS. TARKHAD, A LADY FROM BOMBAY, HAD COME TO SHIRDI FOR A FEW DAYS.

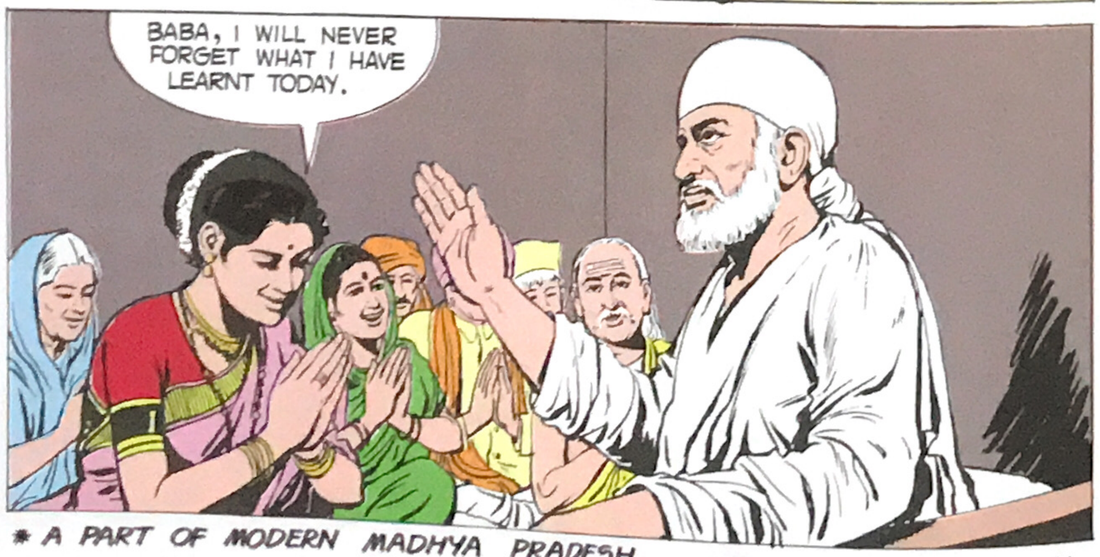
I WILL GIVE IT A CHAPATI.

LATER, WHEN MRS TARKHAD WENT TO DWARKAMAI—

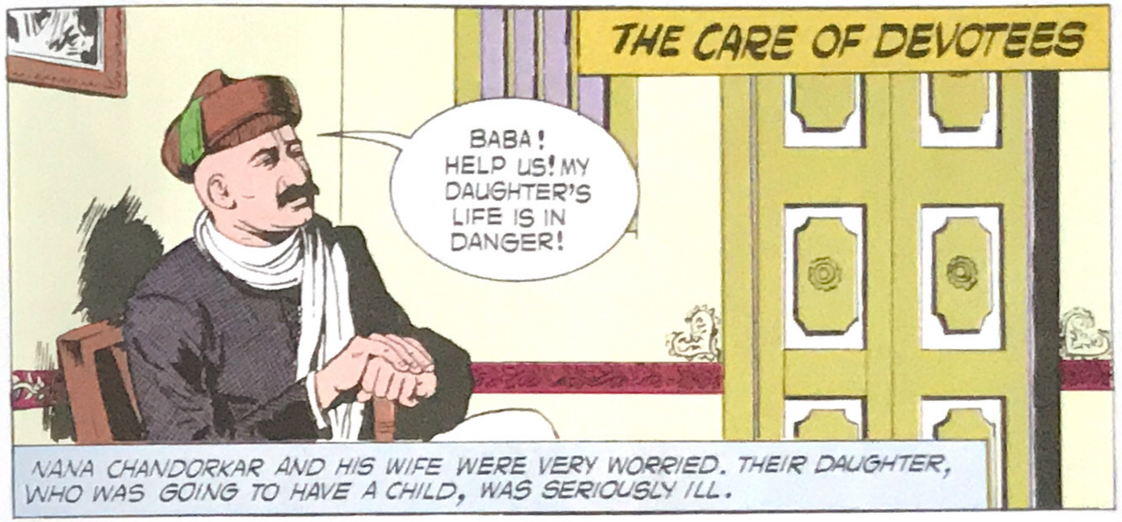
MOTHER, YOU GAVE ME A HEARTY MEAL TODAY. ALWAYS ACT THUS. FIRST GIVE FOOD TO THE HUNGRY AND THEN FEED YOURSELF!





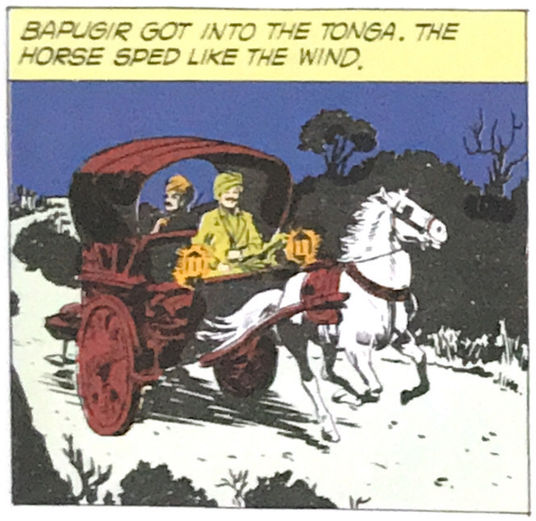


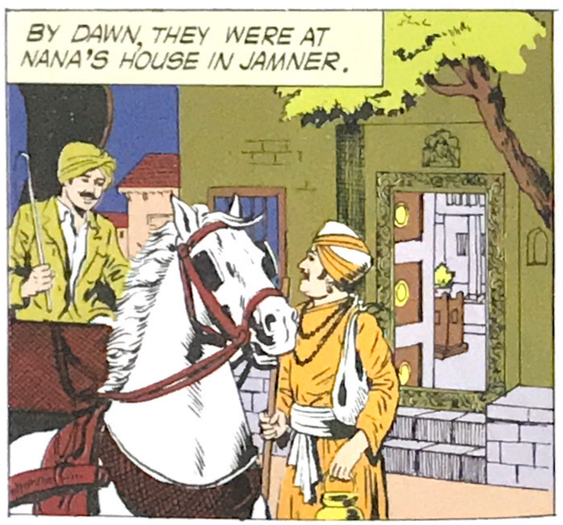
* A PART OF MODERN MADHYA PRADESH.



DON'T WORRY, EVERYTHING WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF!

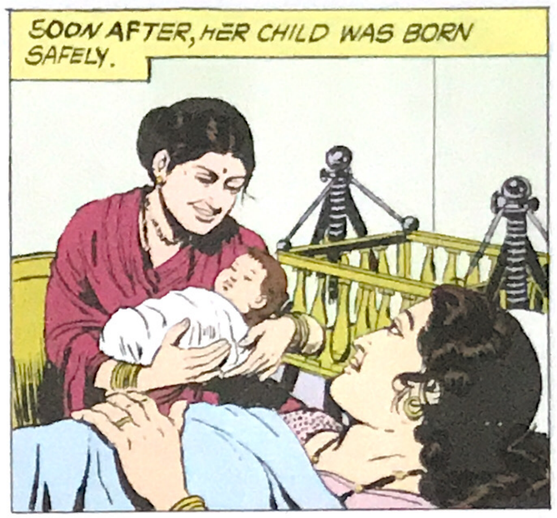
BAPUGIR REACHED JALGAON SOON AFTER MIDNIGHT.
YOU ARE BAPUGIR FROM SHIRDI, AREN'T YOU? NANASAHEB HAS SENT A TONGA FOR YOU.

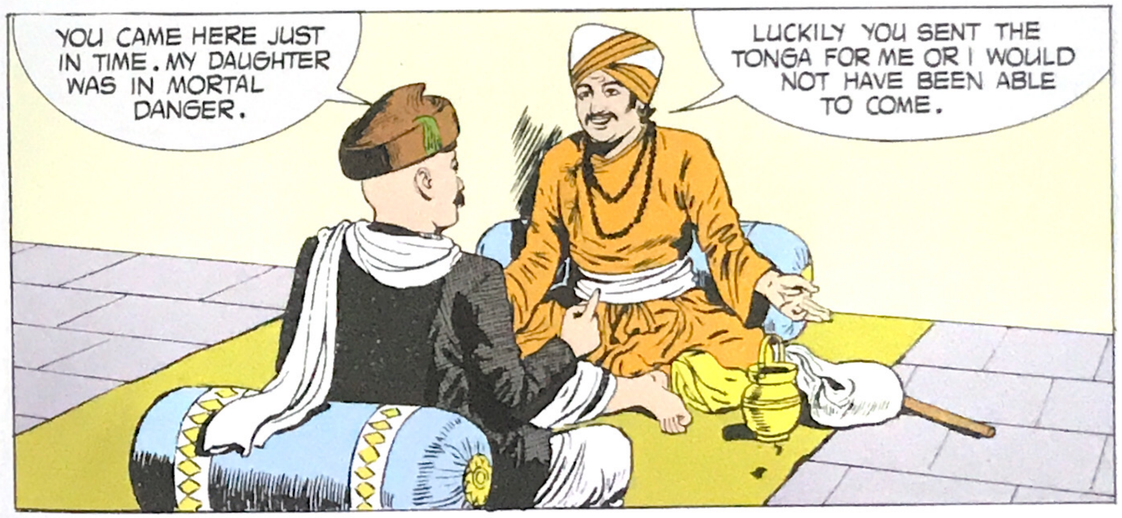

BAPUGIR GOT INTO THE TONGA. THE HORSE SPED LIKE THE WIND.

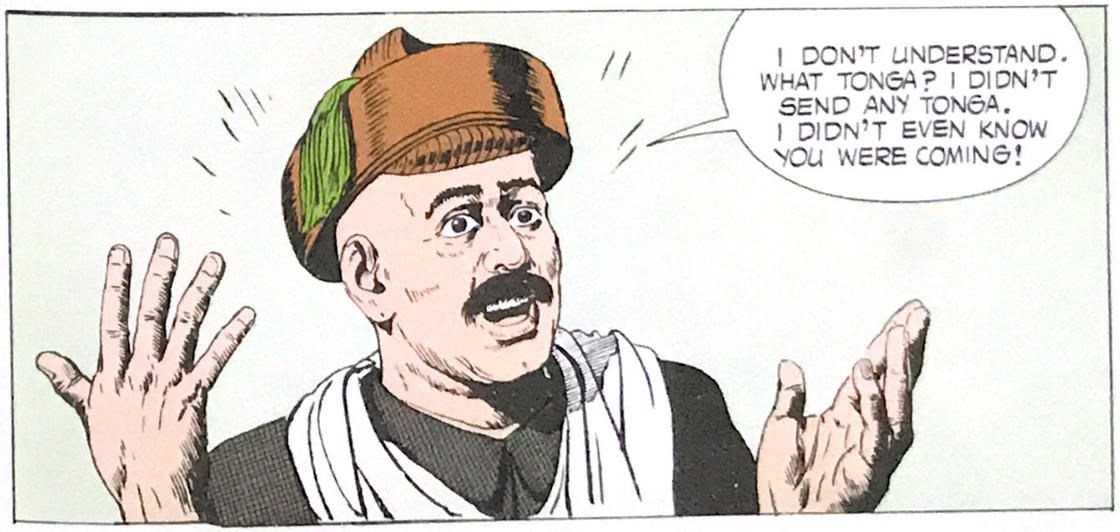

BY DAWN, THEY WERE AT NANA'S HOUSE IN JAMNER.

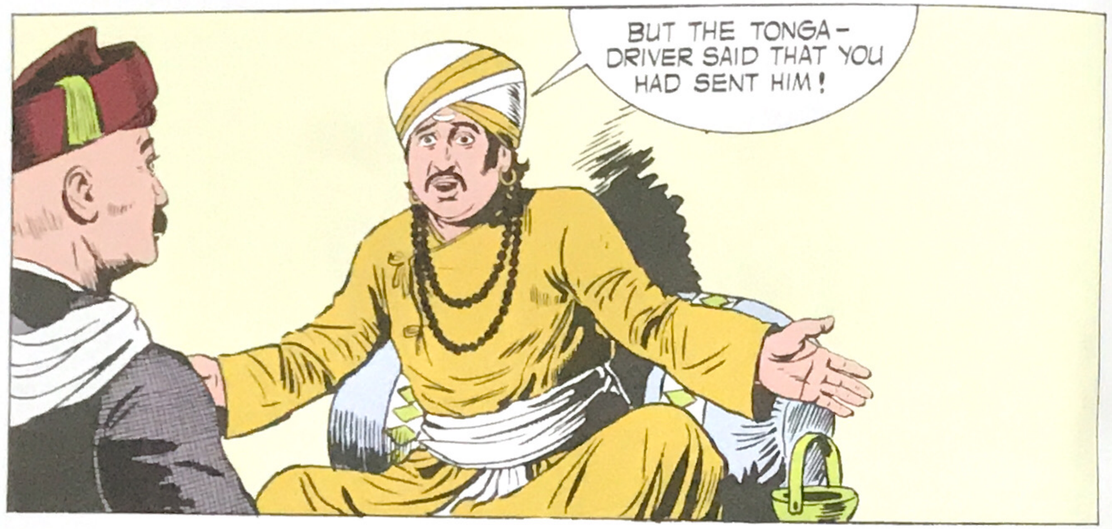
BABA HAS SENT THIS SACRED ASH FOR YOU.
THANK GOD! I AM NO LONGER AFRAID!

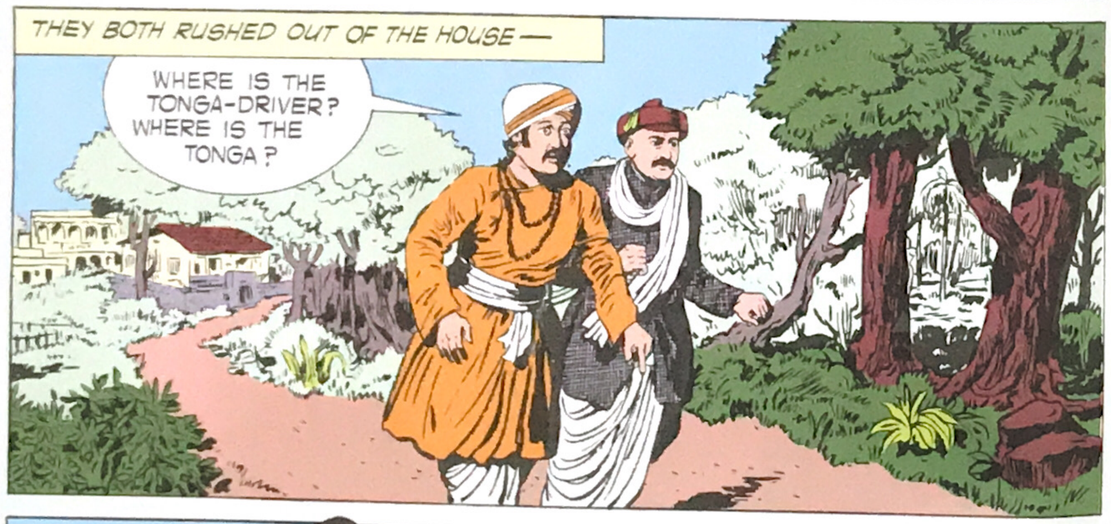
NANA APPLIED THE ASH TO HIS DAUGHTER'S FOREHEAD.


SOON AFTER, HER CHILD WAS BORN SAFELY.


YOU CAME HERE JUST IN TIME. MY DAUGHTER WAS IN MORTAL DANGER.
LUCKILY YOU SENT THE TONGA FOR ME OR I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COME.

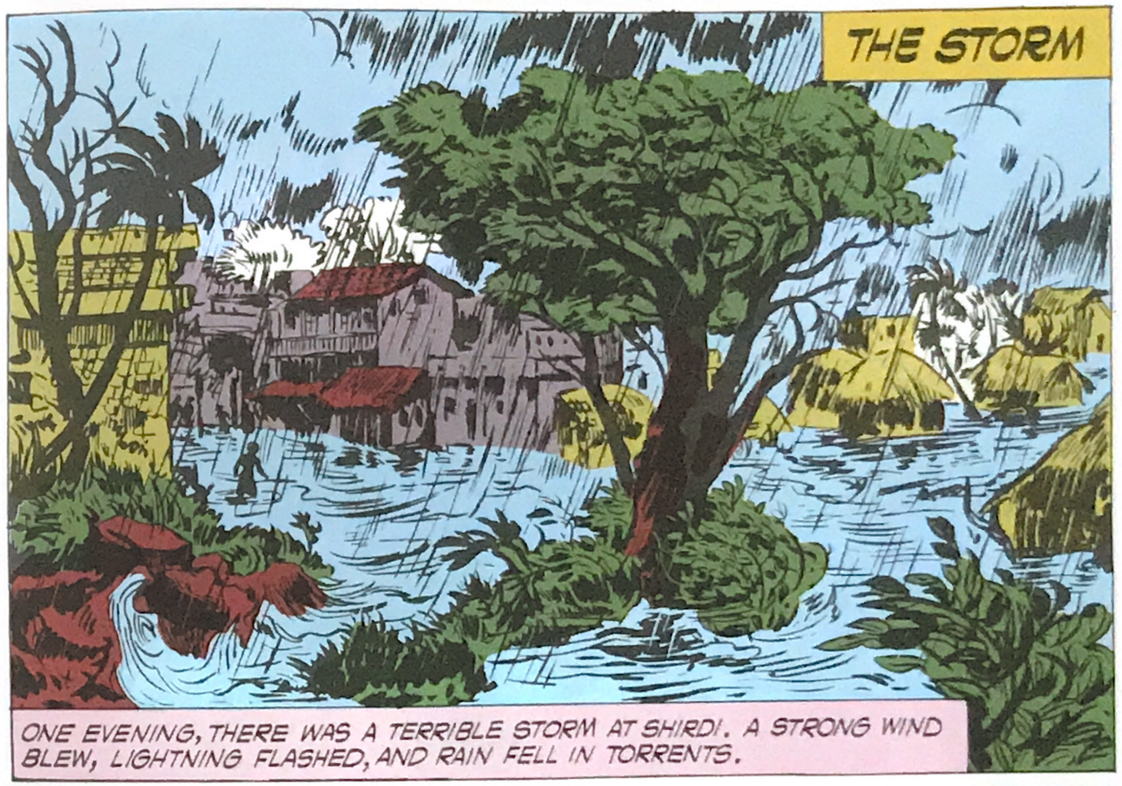

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT TONGA? I DIDN'T SEND ANY TONGA. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU WERE COMING!


BUT THE TONGA-DRIVER SAID THAT YOU HAD SENT HIM!

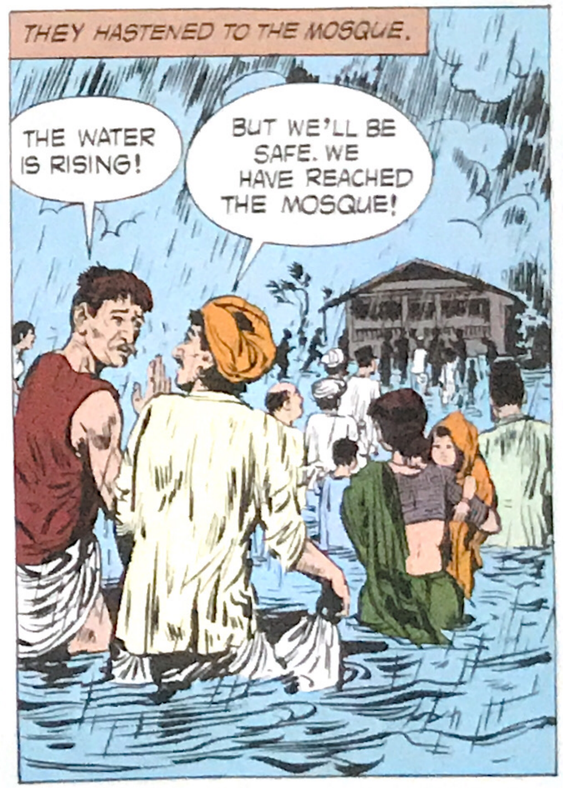

THEY BOTH RUSHED OUT OF THE HOUSE—
WHERE IS THE TONGA-DRIVER? WHERE IS THE TONGA?

OH, SAINATH!* NOW I UNDERSTAND! IT WAS YOU WHO TOOK THE FORM OF THE TONGA-DRIVER. YOU HEARD OUR CRY FOR HELP! I BOW TO YOU, SAI BABA!

* LORD SAI


THE STORM
ONE EVENING, THERE WAS A TERRIBLE STORM AT SHIRDI. A STRONG WIND BLEW, LIGHTNING FLASHED, AND RAIN FELL IN TORRENTS.

PEOPLE RAN OUT OF THEIR HOUSES AS THE ROOFS CAME DOWN.
ONLY BABA CAN HELP US!


THEY HASTENED TO THE MOSQUE.
THE WATER IS RISING!
BUT WE'LL BE SAFE. WE HAVE REACHED THE MOSQUE!

BABA, PLEASE DO SOMETHING! OUR HOUSES ARE BEING WASHED AWAY.

THE STORM IS GETTING WORSE. WE WILL ALL BE DROWNED!

SAI BABA TOOK A ROD IN HIS HAND AND...

...STRUCK THE PILLAR WITH IT.

STOP! STOP YOUR FURY AND BE CALM!

IMMEDIATELY THE RAIN STOPPED, THE STORM CEASED AND THE MOON SHONE BRIGHTLY IN THE CLEAR SKY.

THE PROTECTIVE HAND

THOUGH SAI BABA NEVER LEFT THE MOSQUE, HE WAS AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING EVEN IN FARAWAY PLACES. ONE AFTERNOON, INSTEAD OF PUTTING FIREWOOD INTO THE DHUNI, HE PUT HIS HAND INTO IT.

TWO DAYS LATER, A LETTER ARRIVED. A DEVOTEE READ IT OUT.

BABA, I SALUTE YOU. I AM A BLACKSMITH AND YOUR HUMBLE DEVOTEE. THIS MORNING...

"...MY WIFE WAS WORKING AT THE BELLOWS..."

"... WHEN I CALLED OUT TO HER."

COME HERE FOR A MINUTE.

"MY WIFE GOT UP SUDDENLY AND OUR CHILD, WHO WAS LYING ON HER LAP, SLIPPED..."

"...AND FELL INTO THE FLAMES."

BABA! PROTECT MY CHILD!

"WE PICKED UP THE CHILD AND FOUND HIM UNHURT."

BY THE GRACE OF BABA HE IS SAVED.

BABA, WE KNOW YOU PROTECTED OUR CHILD. WE SALUTE YOU.

THERE WAS SILENCE FOR A MINUTE, THEN AN OLD MAN SPOKE—

BABA. NOW WE KNOW WHY YOU HAD THRUST YOUR HAND INTO THE FIRE THAT DAY!

THE OFFERING

BABA, PLEASE ACCEPT THIS HUMBLE OFFERING.

WHEN PEOPLE OFFERED FRUIT TO SAI BABA...

...HE IMMEDIATELY DISTRIBUTED IT TO THE POOR.

BUT THERE WERE TIMES WHEN BABA ASKED FOR MONEY AS AN OFFERING. THERE WAS ALWAYS A GOOD REASON FOR DOING THIS. ONE DAY TWO GENTLEMEN FROM GOA CAME TO SEE BABA.

GIVE ME FIFTEEN RUPEES.

HERE, BABA, HERE ARE FIFTEEN RUPEES.

BABA, PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONTRIBUTION, TOO.

BABA ACCEPTED THE MONEY FROM THE SECOND MAN, COUNTED IT AND RETURNED IT.

THIRTY-FIVE RUPEES—NO, I DON'T WANT IT. TAKE IT BACK.

BABA, WHY DID YOU ASK ONE MAN FOR MONEY AND REFUSE IT FROM ANOTHER?

SHAMA, MONEY MEANS NOTHING TO ME. DO I HAVE A FAMILY, HOME OR PROPERTY TO LOOK AFTER? I AM FREE. I NEED NOTHING.

DATTA CALLED FOR HIS OWN, SO THESE FIFTEEN RUPEES HAVE BEEN COLLECTED. BUT THOSE THIRTY-FIVE RUPEES ARE NOT OURS; SO THEY WERE RETURNED.

BABA GAVE THE FIFTEEN RUPEES TO A POOR WOMAN.

HERE, TAKE THIS MONEY TO FEED YOUR CHILDREN.

LATER, THE TWO MEN HAD LUNCH AT SHAMA'S HOUSE.

BABA USUALLY TALKS IN RIDDLES. COULD YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HE SAID?

LONG AGO, I HAD VOWED TO OFFER MY FIRST SALARY TO LORD DATTATREYA. BUT WHEN I GOT A JOB WITH A SALARY OF FIFTEEN RUPEES A MONTH, I FORGOT TO KEEP MY VOW. I AM EARNING MUCH MORE NOW BUT STILL I DID NOT FULFIL MY VOW! BABA HAS FREED ME FROM MY DEBT.

DAS GANU

DAS GANU WAS A FAITHFUL DEVOTEE OF SAI BABA.

ONE DAY—

BABA, I WISH TO GO TO PANDHARPUR. PLEASE GIVE ME PERMISSION TO LEAVE SHIRDI.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO, GANU? FOR YOU, SHIRDI IS PANDHARPUR.

HOW CAN THAT BE? LORD VITHAL IS NOT HERE!

THE NEXT MOMENT—

VITHAL!

YES, BABA. FOR ME SHIRDI IS PANDHARPUR!

RAM AND RAHIM

'PRANIPATA' MEANS COMPLETE SURRENDER OF THE BODY, MIND AND WEALTH TO THE GURU.

SAI BABA SAID THAT HIS PARENTS WERE HINDUS. HE KEPT THE SACRED FIRE BURNING AND EXPLAINED CHAPTERS FROM THE BHAGAVAD-GITA AND OTHER HOLY BOOKS. HENCE THE HINDUS REGARDED HIM AS ONE OF THEM.

BUT HE DRESSED LIKE A MUSLIM FAKIR, AND HAD THE NAME OF ALLAH ALWAYS ON HIS LIPS. HE RECITED PERSIAN VERSES AND TAUGHT THE ESSENCE OF THE QURAN. SO THE MUSLIMS THOUGHT THAT HE WAS ONE OF THEM.

ALLAH RAKHEGA VAISA RAHENA! LET US BE CONTENT AND SUBMIT OUR WILL TO ALLAH!

ONE DAY A SMALL CHILD OF FOUR CAME TO BABA WITH SOME FLOWERS.

BABA, THEY WORSHIP GOD IN THE TEMPLES WITH FLOWERS.

SEEING THE CHILD'S FAITH, BABA'S HEART MELTED WITH LOVE.

YOU ARE MY GOD. PLEASE BLESS ME!

HOW STRANGE! BABA NEVER LETS ANYONE WORSHIP HIM LIKE THIS.

AT THIS, A FEW HINDU DEVOTEES BECAME BOLD AND STARTED WORSHIPPING HIM. THEIR HEARTS, TOO, WERE FILLED WITH PURE DEVOTION. SO BABA SUBMITTED QUIETLY.

BUT A MUSLIM DEVOTEE WAS UPSET.

YA ALLAH! WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS? THIS IS A MOSQUE NOT A TEMPLE?

THIS DEVOTEE HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR BABA, BUT HE COULD NOT TOLERATE THE HINDUS WORSHIPPING HIM.

BABA, YOU SHOULD NOT LET THEM WORSHIP YOU. IT IS AGAINST OUR FAITH!

DO NOT BE DISTURBED BY WHAT YOU SEE. ALL THAT IS IS ALLAH!

THE ANSWER ONLY ENRAGED HIM THE MORE. ONE DAY—

I SHALL STRIKE HIM NOW!

JUST THEN, BABA TURNED AND TOUCHED HIS LEFT WRIST...

... AND UNDER BABA'S LOOK, THE DEVOTEE FELL TO THE GROUND IN A DAZE.

MIR JAMAN, ANOTHER MUSLIM FOLLOWER, ALSO PROTESTED AGAINST THE HINDU MANNER OF WORSHIP. ONE DAY—

BABA, THOSE HINDUS ARE MAD! GIVE YOUR PERMISSION AND I'LL SLAY THEM!

MIR, IT IS I WHO AM MAD, BECAUSE I LET THEM WORSHIP ME. SLAY ME FIRST!

AT THIS, MIR JAMAN QUIETLY PUT HIS SWORD BACK INTO ITS SCABBARD.

BE TOLERANT, MIR! HAVE FAITH IN ALLAH AND HE WILL BLESS YOU!

THUS DID BABA SUCCEED IN BRINGING UNITY BETWEEN HINDUS AND MUSLIMS. IN HIS PRESENCE THEY FORGOT THEIR DIFFERENCES OF CASTE AND CREED AND BECAME GOOD FRIENDS.

GOD IS ONE. THEY CALL HIM BY DIFFERENT NAMES. RAM AND RAHIM ARE ONE. SO DO NOT QUARREL. LOVE EACH OTHER. FOLLOW YOUR OWN RELIGION AND SEEK THE TRUTH.

MAHA SAMADHI

AS THE YEARS WENT BY, SAI BABA'S FAME SPREAD. MORE AND MORE DEVOTEES CAME TO SHIRDI. THE PEOPLE STARTED WORSHIPPING BABA LIKE GOD. HE ACCEPTED IT ALL ...

... BUT CONTINUED TO BEG LIKE A POOR FAKIR TO THE END OF HIS LIFE.

ONE DAY, A MILLIONAIRE NAMED BOOTY CAME TO SAI BABA.

BABA, I WISH TO CONSTRUCT A STONE BUILDING WITH A CENTRAL HALL FOR SHRI KRISHNA. HERE IS THE PLAN.

YES, YES, BUILD IT! I WILL GO AND STAY THERE WHEN IT IS READY.

THE WORK STARTED.

WHEN THE BUILDING IS READY, WE SHALL USE IT OURSELVES!

HOW LUCKY I AM THAT BABA IS PLANNING TO STAY HERE!

LITTLE DID BOOTY REALISE WHAT BABA HAD MEANT. BEFORE THE BUILDING WAS COMPLETED, BABA FELL VERY ILL. HE GREW WEAKER AND WEAKER. ON THE 15TH OF OCTOBER,1918, HIS CONDITION BECAME CRITICAL. AT NOON, HE SENT MOST OF HIS DEVOTEES AWAY.

GO, HAVE YOUR LUNCH!

WITH HEAVY HEARTS, THE DEVOTEES LEFT. ONLY A FEW REMAINED. BABA TOOK OUT NINE RUPEE COINS FROM HIS POCKET AND GAVE THEM TO LAXMIBAI, ONE OF THE DEVOTEES.

TAKE THESE COINS. THEY SIGNIFY THE NINE FORMS OF BHAKTI.*

I AM GOING. TAKE ME TO BOOTY'S BUILDING AND BURY ME THERE.

BABA BREATHED HIS LAST. SHIRDI WAS PLUNGED IN GRIEF.

* DEVOTION

BOOTY'S STONE BUILDING CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE 'SAMADHI-MANDIR'. SAI BABA WAS BURIED THERE AND A BEAUTIFUL SHRINE WAS BUILT OVER IT. TO THIS DAY, PEOPLE FLOCK TO SHIRDI TO PAY HOMAGE TO SAI BABA.

॥ रघुपति राघव राजाराम ॥
॥ पतित पावन साईनाम ॥